

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is LisMarie Montonory and I live in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days.

My name is LisMarie, I live in Bridgeport, CT, and have been a bus monitor worker for 3 years. As a school bus monitor, I have to make sure that all the children on my bus stay safe, so the driver can concentrate while trying to keep us all safe, as we head for our destination for the day. Waking up at 5 am in the morning, before the scheduled time, as I get to home base to do my check-ins and then do a thorough safety check of my bus before the day starts, to make sure all is good to go. We have 10 days out of the school year for our Paid Time Off. This includes, Vacation days, sick days, and personal days. The process for Paid time off is very stressful, and as an essential worker, even when you're trying your best to keep safe, it's not a guarantee that you won't get sick. If you get the covid-19 more than two times the chance of getting paid sick time off after that gets less and less. These are our only paid time off from work if we need it, which we all know is not enough time for us to make sure we are caring for ourselves as well as our family to fully perform at work. I first started working as a bus monitor during the pandemic. Even though it still felt unsafe for me to go out in the world at that time, I found it was also necessary as a means to an end for my family.

While working as an essential worker, during the pandemic, navigating through the process of getting paid time off is very difficult. Those are usually times that we need to take care of a family member who is sick even when I am not. Those are the most important Paid Time Offs that I would need more of and don't have. This is not a strong enough strategy that we have in our work policy. This is a stressful job, and we have to make sure we are taking care of ourselves in order to care for those little ones that are traveling on the school bus. This is why I fully support Senate Bill 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS with the following things outlined:

1. Cover all workers regardless of employer size or industry!
2. Eliminate the waiting period to take a paid sick day from 680 hours to immediately after you start working!
3. Include all types of family structures and relationships which will allow workers to care for a child of any age, as well as their chosen family! The bill would also allow you to take paid sick time to care for a family member who experiences family violence or sexual assault.
4. Increase the number of hours of paid sick time workers can accrue and use per year from 40 to 80 hours.
5. Protect against future pandemics by allowing paid sick time to be used when a worker's place of work or child's school/place of care is closed by public officials for a public health emergency!

Thank you for your time,
Lis Marie Montonory Bridgeport, CT